

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED *May 21 1979*

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Moss Tobacco Factory

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main &amp; Seventh Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Clarksville

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
Fifth (Dan Daniel)

STATE

Virginia

VICINITY OF

CODE

51

COUNTY

Mecklenburg

CODE

117

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☒ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH  
**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**  
☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☐ OCCUPIED  
☒ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE ☐ MUSEUM  
☐ COMMERCIAL ☐ PARK  
☐ EDUCATIONAL ☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ ENTERTAINMENT ☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ GOVERNMENT ☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ INDUSTRIAL ☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ MILITARY ☒ OTHER warehouse

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mr. &amp; Mrs. Fred Lindholm

STREET &amp; NUMBER

Main Street

CITY, TOWN

Clarksville

VICINITY OF

STATE

Virginia 23927

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Mecklenburg County Courthouse

STREET &amp; NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Boynton

STATE

Virginia 23917

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS (2) (See Continuation Sheet #1)**

TITLE

(1) Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory

DATE

1958

☒ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Library of Congress

CITY, TOWN

Washington

STATE

D.C.

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Moss Tobacco Factory is conspicuously sited on the northwest corner of Main and Seventh streets in Clarksville. Erected in two stages during the 1850s, the three-and-one-half-story, four-course-American-bond building is a rare surviving example of an antebellum tobacco factory.

The principal (south) gable end contains the building's main entrance. The centrally positioned first-floor entrance is deeply recessed and features a raised-paneled surround. The recession is a later addition and has resulted in the loss of the original door. Doorways for loading on the second and third floors retain their original double doors and paneled surrounds. The doorways are flanked by window openings that have lost their original 12/12 hung sash. The openings retain their wooden segmental lintels, which are used throughout the building's other elevations. Paired windows are found on the attic story. The first- and second-floor windows contain iron bars.

The west elevation consists of twelve bays constructed during the 1850s. The elevation originally contained five distinct entrances. A side entrance in the southwest bay and a loading entrance in the fourth bay have been enclosed by concrete blocks. A loading entrance on the first and second stories of the seventh bay and a side entrance in the tenth bay remain open. Many of the windows retain their original 12/12 hung sash and iron bars. When first built, the roof contained a row of five dormers, which were removed in the present century. A small cupola remains.

Like the west elevation, the east elevation is comprised of twelve bays. All the first-floor entries have been enclosed by concrete blocks. On the second story, two loading entries in the fifth and eighth bays remain open. Original 12/12 hung sash and iron bars are retained on some windows.

The three-and-one-half-story rear elevation consists of two bays. Scattered windows retain their original 12/12 hung sash and iron bars.

While the building's interior plan has undergone considerable alteration, its interior structural support system has been preserved. The original Doric column posts support rough-hewn joists on the first and second floors. Original pine flooring survives throughout. The first-floor windows retain their fluted symmetrical architrave trim and molded corner blocks.

RCC

### Boundary Justification:

The factory occupies its original site on the northwest corner of Seventh and Main streets in Clarksville. The building is bounded on the west by Seventh Street, on the south by Main Street, and on the north and east by adjacent properties. It occupies a one-half-acre lot.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGR CULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1850s BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

When Benjamin Henry Latrobe had leaves of Nicotiana Tabacum carved on the capitals in the Senate wing of the U.S. Capitol, he was honoring the contribution of tobacco to America's economic life. Almost a half-century later, the region most responsible for that contribution was still pervaded by every phase of the tobacco industry. The Moss Tobacco Factory in the Town of Clarksville in Mecklenburg County remains as a relic of the industrial and commercial production of tobacco in antebellum Virginia.

Clarksville had been a center for manufacturing, storing, and marketing tobacco as early as 1819. Two tobacco factories were licensed in that year to "stem and manufacture tobacco". The increase of navigation on the Roanoke River and the growth in farm production helped promote the town's thriving antebellum tobacco economy. The 1855 Statistical Gazetteer of Virginia noted that the Town of Clarksville increased in population more rapidly between 1845-1855 than any other village in the state. The Gazetteer also observed that 2000 hogsheads of tobacco were inspected there annually and shipped "down river". The Moss Tobacco Factory was a key factor in the town's annual production.

Before 1842 Robert H. Moss, with various associates and under various names, operated a tobacco factory in Clarksville. In 1842 Moss and William Kyle operated a factory under the name of Robert H. Moss & Co. The company went bankrupt and by 1850 was reestablished with Robert H. and Reuben Moss and George B. Hammett, factory manager, as partners in the firm of Moss Brothers & Co. The old factory was reopened, and by 1853 a new building had been constructed on land purchased by the concern in 1852 from the Exchange Bank of Virginia.

The type of building used in the manufacture of tobacco ranged from the nondescript wooden shed of the plantation and farm to the larger three-and-one-half-story brick structure that was built by Moss and assessed for \$12,000 in 1862. A contemporary and local source, The Tobacco Plant, reported in 1859 that the company conducted "the largest manufacturing business in the United States, and, if so, we presume the largest in the world. We are informed that they employed 160 operatives during the year 1858, and that they put up and shipped upwards of 10,000 boxes of manufactured tobacco."

The "160 operatives" mentioned in the paper indicate the labor-intensive nature of tobacco processing in the antebellum factory. The actual labor force would have consisted of hired slaves, usually rented on a contractual basis from neighboring plantations. The larger establishments, like Moss, were organized with an extensive division of labor. Stemmers were skilled in removing the mid-rib from the tobacco leaf, dippers applied the secret flavorings, twistlers fashioned the tobacco into twists, lump-makers modelled the plugs, and prizers and screw-men turned the screw presses. The wide use of manual labor resulted in a factory building similar in design to the textile buildings of industrial New England.

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Moss Tobacco Factory, Mecklenburg County, Va.

CONTINUATION SHEET #1

ITEM NUMBER 6,7 & PAGE 1

6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

- (2) Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Survey  
1968, 1978 State  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission  
221 Governor Street  
Richmond, Virginia 23219

8. SIGNIFICANCE

The Southern tobacco factory and New England textile mill were both rectangular brick structures, fifty by one hundred feet or more, two to four stories in height, and usually covered by a gable roof. Occasionally, as seen on the 1853 William Grant factory in Richmond, the tobacco factory would contain a flat roof, used to air and sun dry the flavored tobacco. Both buildings contained numerous windows, the light source for the manual laborers. The antebellum tobacco factory's windows were barred since some slaves were prone to escape. The New England worker's presence was assured by his economic situation.

The Moss Tobacco Factory operated until 1862. After the Civil War, bankruptcy necessitated the sale of the property. Sold at auction on September 15, 1871, the property included "tobacco factory fixtures...sufficient to work 200 hands." By 1872 the factory building operated as an exchange or auction house for the sale of tobacco then processed in Richmond and Petersburg. The factory continued as a tobacco warehouse until the Southside market became concentrated in Danville. The building presently stands vacant, its future uncertain.

MTP/RCC

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Robert, Joseph Clark. The Tobacco Kingdom: Plantation, Market, and Factory in Virginia and North Carolina, 1800-1860. Durham, N. C., 1938.
- Statistical Gazetteer of Virginia. Richmond, 1855. p. 211.
- Tilley, Nannie May. The Bright Tobacco Industry 1860-1929. Chapel Hill: University of N. C. Press, 1948.
- Walker, W. H. C. Clerk County Court of Mecklenburg, Plat of the Town of Clarksville, (1897).

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Bracey, Susan L. Life by the Roaring Roanoke, A History of Mecklenburg County, Va.  
Mecklenburg Co., Va., 1977, pp. 351-359.

The (Clarksville) Tobacco Plant, Clarksville, various issues (later the Southside Virginian).  
Mecklenburg County Deed Book 34, p. 595. (1855).

Mecklenburg County Land Tax Books, 1850-1862.

The Roanoke Valley. Clarksville, Va., (1873).

(See Continuation Sheet #1)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Clarksville South, Va. - N.C.

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A 1 7 7 1 8 1 9 0 4 0 5 5 6 2 0

B                        

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C                        

D                        

E                        

F                        

G                        

H                        

### VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The Moss Tobacco Factory building is located on a narrow rectangular lot which comprises about one-half acre; fronts on Main Street and is bounded on the west by Seventh Street, on the north and east by adjacent properties; and measures approximately 75'x300'.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
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## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission Staff

ORGANIZATION

Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE

December 1978

STREET & NUMBER

221 Governor Street

TELEPHONE

(804) 786-3144

CITY OR TOWN

Richmond,

STATE

Virginia 23219

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE X

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Tucker Hill, Executive Director  
Virginia Historic Landmarks Commission

DATE DEC 19 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE May 21 1979

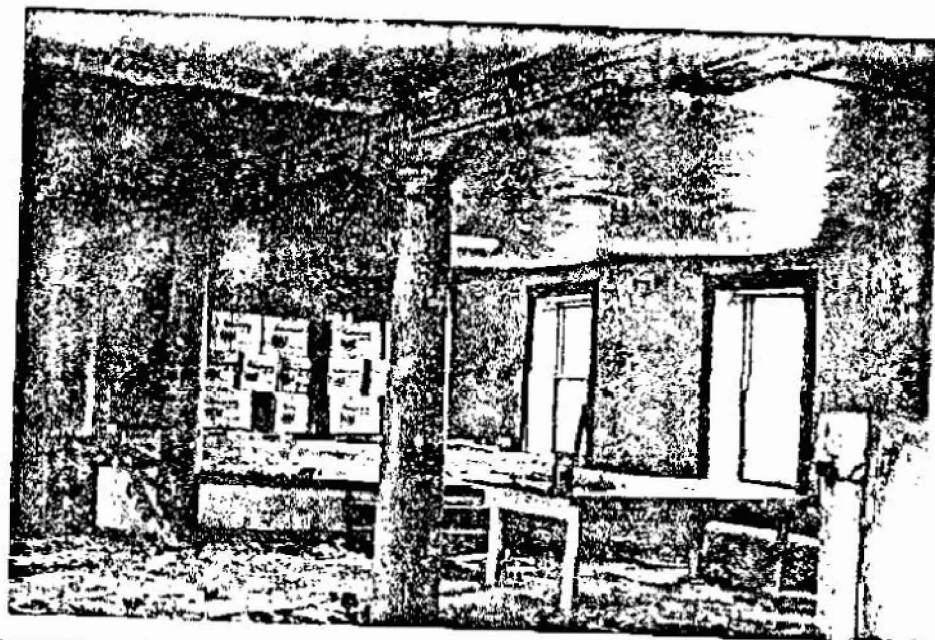
ATTEST: KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION



View of Main (Southwest) Entry



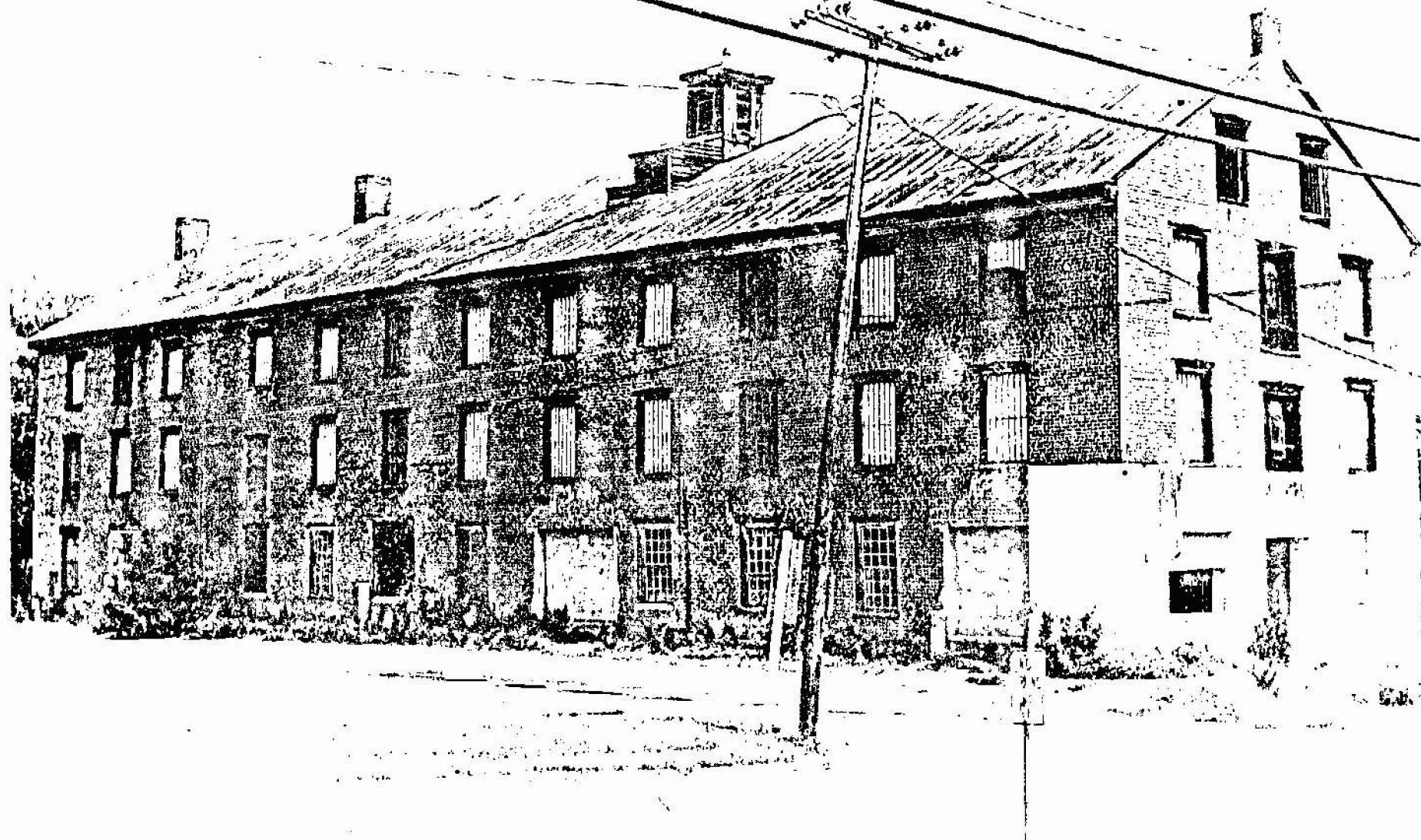
View of Interior - First Floor

VIRGINIA HISTORIC LANDMARKS COM.  
221 GOVERNOR STREET  
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23219

MOSS TOBACCO FACTORY  
Mecklenburg County, Virginia  
Credit: VA Historic Landmarks Commission  
1978  
Negative Filed: VA State Library  
Exterior view of southwest  
4383

1 of 1

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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
DIVISION OF MINERAL RESOURCES  
JAMES L. CALVER, STATE GEOLOGIST

U.S.G.S. 7.5' quadrangle (scale 1:24000)  
Clarksville South, Va - NC 1968

CLARKSVILLE SOUTH  
VIRGINIA-NORTH  
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (7  
5174 CLARKSVILLE 15 0

MOSS TOBACCO FACTORY, Mecklenburg County

UTM References:  
17/718190/4055620

